

# Elwha River Restoration

Olympic National Park  
Washington



Next year, removal of two dams on the Elwha River will begin, setting in motion one of the largest restoration projects in U.S. history. We're excited to share this project and these buttons! Here's more info:

## Removing Elwha and Glines Canyon Dams

The largest dam removal in U.S. history will free the Elwha River after 100 years, Salmon populations will swell from 3,000 to more than 300,000 as all five species of Pacific salmon return to more than 70 miles of river and stream.

## Renewing a Culture

The returning salmon and restored river will renew the culture of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, who have lived along the river since time immemorial. Tribal members will have access to sacred sites now inundated and cultural traditions can be reborn. The NPS and the Tribe are primary partners on this project.

## Restoring an Ecosystem

This project creates a living laboratory where people can watch and learn what happens when salmon return after a century to a still wild and protected ecosystem. The return of fish will bring bear, eagles and other animals back to an ecosystem that has been deprived of a vital food source for 100 years.

## Economic Benefits

Just as the dams played a vital role in the history and development of the area, removing them will create new opportunities for growth and regional vitality.

## Restoring the Coast

Removing the dams will reestablish the natural flow of sediment from the mountains to the coast—rebuilding wetlands, beaches and the estuary at the river's mouth.

# Elwha River Restoration Timeline



## 2010

- Construction is now underway on replacing a culvert on Griff Creek (an important tributary stream) and on the tribal fish hatchery, tribal wastewater system, two levees and a new outfall pipe for the Nippon paper mill in Port Angeles.
- Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe habitat restoration and revegetation crews will construct up to 16 engineered log jams in the river's lower five miles and will plant native shrubs and trees in disturbed areas along the lower river. Several culvert replacement projects will be completed to provide better fish access to tributaries and improved water flows in the estuary.
- Removal of invasive plants will continue around the two reservoirs.
- Several large projects were completed in 2009 and early 2010, including the Port Angeles Water Treatment Plant, Elwha Water Facilities, and the park's native plant center in Robin Hill Farm County Park. Tribal crews have installed six engineered log jams and planted 2,000 native plants in and near the lower river.
- The contract for dam removal will be awarded this summer.



## 2011

- Water level in Lake Mills will be lowered to allow preparations for dam removal.
- Dam removal begins; will last 2.5 – 3 years.
- Long-term revegetation activities will begin as water levels drop and formerly submerged land is exposed.